

Candide and Other Stories (Oxford World's Classics)

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Candide is the most famous of Voltaire's "philosophical tales," in which he combined witty improbabilities with the sanest of good sense. First published in 1759, it was an instant bestseller and has come to be regarded as one of the key texts of the Enlightenment. What *Candide* does for chivalric romance, the other tales in this selection--*Micromegas*, *Zadig*, *The Ingenu*, and *The White Bull*--do for science fiction, the Oriental tale, the sentimental novel, and the Old Testament. The most extensive one-volume selection currently available, this new edition includes a new verse translation of the story Voltaire based on Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath's Tale: What Pleases the Ladies* and opens with a revised introduction that reflects recent critical debates, including a new section on *Candide*.

About the Series:

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Political satire doesn't age well, but occasionally a diatribe contains enough art and universal mirth to survive long after its timeliness has passed. *Candide* is such a book. Penned by that Renaissance man of the Enlightenment, Voltaire, *Candide* is steeped in the political and philosophical controversies of the 1750s. But for the general reader, the novel's driving principle is clear enough: the idea (endemic in Voltaire's day) that we live in the best of all possible worlds, and apparent folly, misery and strife are actually harbingers of a greater good we cannot perceive, is hogwash.

Telling the tale of the good-natured but star-crossed *Candide* (think Mr. Magoo armed with deadly force), as he travels the world struggling to be reunited with his love, Lady Cunegonde, the novel smashes such ill-conceived optimism to splinters. *Candide*'s tutor, Dr. Pangloss, is steadfast in his philosophical good cheer, in the face of more and more fantastic misfortune; *Candide*'s other companions always supply good sense in the nick of time. Still, as he demolishes optimism, Voltaire pays tribute to human resilience, and in doing so gives the book a pleasant indomitability common to farce. Says one character, a princess turned one-buttocked hag by unkind Fate: "I have wanted to kill myself a hundred times, but somehow I am still in love with life. This ridiculous weakness is perhaps one of our most melancholy propensities; for is there anything more stupid than to be eager to go on carrying a burden which one would gladly throw away, to loathe one's very being and yet to hold it fast, to fondle the snake that devours us until it has eaten our hearts away?"--Michael Gerber

In this new translation of Voltaire's best-known work, distinguished translator Burton Raffel captures the irreverent spirit of *Candide* and renders the novel in clear, vivacious English. Stylistically superior to all predecessors, Raffel's version now stands as the translation of choice for twenty-first-century readers.

Other Books

A Love Story. 'Everything revolved around their love. They were constantly bathed in a passion that they carried with them, around them, as though it were the only air they could breathe.' H el ene Grandjean, an attractive young widow, lives a secluded life in Paris with her only child, Jeanne. Jeanne is a delicate and nervous girl who jealously guards her mother's affections. When Jeanne falls ill, she is attended by Dr Deberle, whose growing admiration for H el ene gradually turns into mutual passion. Deberle's wife Juliette, meanwhile, flirts with a shallow admirer, and H el ene, intent on preventing her adultery, precipitates a crisis whose consequences are far-reaching. Jeanne realizes she has a rival for H el ene's devotion in the doctor, and begins to exercise a tyrannous hold over her mother. The eighth novel in Zola's celebrated Rougon-Macquart series, A Love Story is an intense psychological and nuanced portrayal of love's different guises. Zola's study extends most notably to the city of Paris itself, whose shifting moods reflect H el ene's emotional turmoil in passages of extraordinary lyrical description.

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